

EDITOR'S MISCELLANY



DR. WILLIAM H. WELCH, of the Johns Hopkins University, before the Maryland State Nurses' Association:

"You have to consider exactly how to proceed to secure the State Examining Board. I noticed in several of the States the law was almost imperilled by efforts to secure the presence of physicians upon these Examining Boards. Now I am quite sure that it is not the function of the physician to examine nurses. They had something to say in the training of the nurses; the nurse should not go forth without having come under the guidance of the physician; but your profession is a skilled profession which requires special knowledge, and a special knowledge that is possessed by the trained nurse and not by the physician. Akin as the professions of medicine and of nursing are, they are still distinct professions, and there is no necessity, in my opinion, and there are certain disadvantages, in the requirement that physicians should be members of the Examining Board. Most of these laws provide that the Examining Board shall consist of persons chosen, or at least nominated, by the State association, and that seems to me probably the wisest method.

"These two features, then, are the ones which insure that the registered nurse has the requisite training and has the requisite knowledge. They insure that she has been graduated from a recognized training-school, one with the proper standards as regards the period of study and practical training. The law further provides that after the nurse has given evidence that she possesses the preliminary training she must pass an examination, not by her own training-school, where conditions come in that do not absolutely insure the necessary qualifications, but before a separate and distinct Examining Board. These are the essential features, as I understand it, of the law—the existence in the first place of a State association of nurses, in the second place a provision in the law for a suitable preliminary training, and, in the third place, the passing of the examination of a Board of Examiners who have not of necessity been the candidate's own teachers.

"Now, what objection can possibly be raised against this desire on the part of the nurse's profession? No real objection, but you are likely, I suppose, to encounter some opposition, and I suppose that opposition will be based upon the idea that such a law as this sets up an unjustifiable distinction; that it sets apart a certain class from others. But the distinction is one eminently desirable, namely that the term 'registered nurse' shall mean that here we have nurses who possess certain defined qualifications. At present a diploma does not mean that of necessity, so that you require protection on account of the inflow into your profession of those who claim the same title without having acquired the same qualifications. Therefore this argument, which is the only one that occurs to me, is one that you will be able to meet when you go before the Legislature at Annapolis—that you are proposing a distinction, but one based upon right and justice, and one that it is certainly eminently desirable to make. The best argument, perhaps, is that of the benefit to the whole community, because the great majority of people have at present no way of determining who are the really qualified nurses, while the institution of the title of 'registered nurse' would overcome this difficulty.

"From every point of view that occurs to me your movement is one that should have the support and sympathy especially of the members of the legal profession, of the members of the medical profession, and of all women who are interested in improving the opportunities for women of higher professional and practical work, for skilled nursing is a great field for women's activity. I wish you all success in your efforts, and shall be glad to be of any assistance to you in my power in securing the desired legislation."

[Each time that nurses have organized to secure State registration men and women of note have come forward to give their approval and support to the movement, and their names should live in the history of nursing progress.—ED.]

THE *Spirit of Missions* for February gives a very interesting account of the foot-binding custom among the Chinese. It seems that a girl with unbound feet has little chance of a husband. Public opinion will fully sustain a bridegroom in returning his bride to her mother if he discover after marriage that his wife has unbound or "large" feet. He is not likely to make this discovery before marriage, as young men and women, though they may be betrothed as children, are not allowed to see each other until the day of the wedding.

This custom of foot binding is so old that its origin is lost. There is no fixed age for beginning to bind the feet. Among the rich the binding is begun with girls of four or five; among the poorer people usually from seven to nine. In any case the process is intensely painful. "The four smaller toes are doubled under the foot, the big toe is laid on top, and the deformity is then tightly bandaged." The process is repeated every few days, the bandages being drawn more tightly each time. Three inches is considered a proper length for the deformed foot of a full-grown woman. . . .

Apparently nothing was ever done to abate the cruelties of foot-binding until the Christian missionaries began a campaign of education against it. They have been joined by other foreigners in the empire, and there is now a flourishing association known as the *Tien Tsu Hui*, or "Natural Feet Society." Some of the more progressive Chinese officials have coöperated with this society and have written protests against the foot-binding process. About two years ago the Empress Dowager issued an edict urging that it be given up. But in spite of both foreign and native opposition it will be many years before the practice disappears.

Recently the *Tien Tsu Hui* offered prizes for essays by Chinese on foot-binding. Over two hundred articles were received, most of them condemning the practice. Here, however, are two samples of the argument for the defence. Incidentally they show plainly the current Chinese opinion concerning women:

1. "Bound feet assist women to do their duty, which is to stay at home and not to gad about in their neighbors' houses.

2. "Those who complain of the pain involved in binding the feet forget that suffering is necessary for the proper development of woman's character. A woman who has not eaten this bitterness is likely to be opinionated and to want her own way. She will argue and quarrel with her husband, and the two will oppose each other like a pair of strong hands, each coming against the other, causing smacks and crashes. On the contrary, a bound-footed woman will receive correction and is submissive and obedient to her husband. Confucius says that women should be weak and men strong. This is the proper order."

As Christian teaching spreads foot-binding will naturally decrease. For